

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 0246

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF, UNHCR
SUBJECT: CONFERENCE ON TERRITORIAL ASYLUM

1. SUMMARY. CONFERENCE ON TERRITORIAL ASYLUM CONCLUDED ITS FIRST WEEK STILL NOT FULLY ORGANIZED, BUT THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE NOW IS AT WORK PROCEEDING ON THE U.N. GROUP OF EXPERTS TEXT. TIME ALLOTTED FOR PLENARY CONTINUES TO BE DEVOTED INSTEAD TO PROTRACTED AND SELDOM FRUITFUL CONSULTATION AMONG REGIONAL GROUP SPOKESMEN, CHAIRED NOW BY THE CONFERENCE PRESIDENT. END SUMMARY.

2. FIRST WEEK OF THE CONFERENCE ON TERRITORIAL ASYLUM CLOSED WITH THE CONFERENCE STILL NOT COMPLETELY ORGANIZED AND TWO ASPECTS OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE STILL NOT AGREED UPON. WHILE THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE FINALLY DID MANAGE TO SETTLE DOWN TO ITS SUBSTANTIVE TASK (FOUR DAYS BEHIND SCHEDULE), IT HAS NOT YET BEEN POSSIBLE TO FORM THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE WHICH MUST WORK IN PARALLEL WITH IT. MOST TIME HAS CONTINUED TO BE GIVEN OVER TO FAIRLY FRUITLESS CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN REGIONAL GROUP SPOKESMEN, CHAIRED NOW BY THE CONFERENCE PRESIDENT BUT WITH RYBAKOV CONTINUING TO PLAY AN ACTIVE AND MISCHIEVOUS ROLE.

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3. WITH THE BITTERNESS OF THE CONTESTED ELECTION BEHIND HIM, NASCIEMENTO Y SILVA (BRAZIL) HAS SHOWN HIMSELF TO BE A COMPETENT CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AND ARRANGED AT ITS FIRST MEETING JANUARY 13 FOR THE DEFEATED CANDIDATE, NETTEL (AUSTRIA), TO BE ELECTED SMOOTHLY AND QUICKLY BY ACCLAMATION AS VICE CHAIRMAN. UNAWARE APPARENTLY THAT THE WEO GROUP HAD DECIDED UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT ITS INTERESTS IN THE CONFERENCE NOW WOULD BE

SERVED BEST BY ACCEPTING NONE OF THE REMAINING SUBORDINATE OFFICES, THE CHAIRMAN'S CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR RAPPORTEUR WAS UNRESPONDED TO. DEFERRED UNTIL JANUARY 14 IT THEN HAD TO BE DEFERRED AGAIN, ANOTHER VICTIM OF THE PERSISTENT INABILITY OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THIS CONFERENCE TO REACH AGREEMENT THROUGH CONSULTATIONS.

4. TO OUR SURPRISE NASCIEMENTO Y SILVA MANEUVERED THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ADROITLY INTO ACCEPTING THE U.N. GROUP OF EXPERTS TEXT AS THE BASIC TEXT TO PROCEED FROM. DESPITE SCATTERED OBJECTIONS AND STRONG SOVIET RESERVATIONS. ARTICLE BY ARTICLE CONSIDERATION BEGAN FRIDAY AFTERNOON.

5. A STRONG AND LENGTHY SOVIET SPEECH, WHICH THE RESIDENT AMBASSADOR WAS BROUGHT INTO THE ROOM TO DELIVER TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, REPRESENTED A SWEEPING AND VERY NEGATIVE OPENING STATEMENT, AND THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR MECHANICALLY READ THROUGH THE POINTS ON THE BASIC TEXT ISSUE APPARENTLY OBLIVIOUS OF THE FACT THAT THE DECISION ON THIS HAD BEEN TAKEN JUST BEFORE HER ARRIVAL. THE STATEMENT FLATLY STATED DOUBT THAT A TERRITORIAL ASYLUM CONVENTION WAS NECESSARY, AND ARGUED IN A TRANSPARENT WAY THAT SUCH ANEW INSTRUMENT COULD WEAKDN EXISTING REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS.

6. THE GENERAL COMMITTEE, WHICH FINALLY ASSEMBLED JANUARY 13, PROVED TO BE NO MORE EFFECTIVE AT REACHING AGREEMENT THAN OTHER ARRANGEMENTS AT THIS CONFERENCE, AND THE OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS OF ORGANIZING THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE AND CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION BY NGO'S PASSED BACK INTO THE HANDS OF THE MEETING OF SPOKES-
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MENT. WITH PLENARY SUSPENDED DURING THE ENTIRE MORNING FRIDAY AGREEMENT FINALLY WAS REACHED AMONG REGIONAL SPOKESMEN ON A DRAFTING COMMITTEE OF 31 (WITH 8 WEO).

7. THE NGO QUESTION WAS LEFT OVER TO FURTHER CONSULTATION. WHEN THE PLENARY RECESSED FOR 15 MINUTES TO REPORT THESE RESULTS, THE U.S. PRESSED FOR DECISION ON NGO'S BUT RECEIVED NO SUPPORT, AND THE PRESIDENT RULED THAT THE PLENARY WOULD ADJOURN UNTIL MONDAY, JANUARY 17, CARRYING THIS UNRESOLVED ISSUE WITH IT. COMMENT. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE SOVIETS AND ARABS ARE PRESSING FOR DELAY IN THE EXPECTATION THAT LDC OPPOSITION TO NGO PARTICIPATION CAN BE CONSOLIDATED, AND THE PRESIDENT, WILFULLY OR NOT, IS PLAYING INTO THEIR HANDS. END COMMENT.

8. THE PRESISTENCE OF THE ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVE IN PRESSING TO BE PUT FORWARD AS WEO CANDIDATE FOR THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE POSED AN AWKWARD PROBLEM FOR THE WESTERN EUROPEANS. IN THE EVENT, THERE WERE NINE APPLICANTS FOR THE EIGHT SEATS. (U.S. HAD AGREED BEFOREHAND TO DEFER TO CANADA, WITH CLOSE COORDINATION

ASSURED, BOTH FOR TACTICAL REASONS WITH REGARD TO THE U.S.
POSITION AND TO HELP INFLUENCE A PREFERRED WESTERN COMPOSITION.)
AS FORTUNE FOR WESTERN EUROPEAN SENSIBILITIES WOULD HAVE IT,
STRAWS WERE DRAWN WITHIN THE WEO GROUP, AND THE ISRAELI
REPRESENTATIVE DREW, AND ACCEPTED, THE SHORT STRAW. CATTO

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